

**WASHINGTON, DC** - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) announced that the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations bill approved by the House of Representatives yesterday includes more than \$42 million in federal funds for programs and projects that will benefit the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The legislation combines 10 of 13 appropriations bills for fiscal year 2009 and will fund 12 of 15 Cabinet departments, several independent government agencies, and the District of Columbia government. The Senate is expected to vote on the legislation this week before sending it to the President to be signed into law.

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed continues to face serious environmental challenges. Over the past two decades, federal, state, and local partners have worked together to produce modest restoration gains, but stronger action is required to reduce the region's nutrient and sediment loads to the Bay and restore the health of this magnificent estuary.

"This funding demonstrates recognition by the Congress of the value in supporting programs that enhance the great national treasure that is the Chesapeake Bay," **stated Congressman Hoyer.**

"This investment will significantly bolster efforts at the national and regional levels to restore this treasure and ultimately improve the quality of life for the 16 Million citizens who live in the watershed."

*Congressman Hoyer helped secure funding for the following programs that will benefit the Chesapeake Bay.*

### **EPA Chesapeake Bay Program - \$21.001 Million**

The Chesapeake Bay Program, which is run by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), will receive \$21.001 Million for a variety of restoration and water quality issues to restore the Bay to a healthy and self-sustaining ecosystem.

### **Chesapeake Bay Non Point Source Reduction Targeted Watershed Grants - \$8 Million**

This funding is made available for competitive grants for projects that expand the collective knowledge on the most innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective strategies - including market-based approaches - for reducing excess nutrient loads within specific tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay.

### **Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program - \$7.2 Million**

NOAA is also dedicated to enhancing our nation's natural resources through education, training, and research. The national Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program was established in 2002 to improve the understanding of environmental stewardship for students and teachers in the classroom. B-WET is a key program that enables the education of Bay communities about the importance of sustaining our coastal environment.

### **Chesapeake Bay Oyster Habitat Restoration- \$4.6 Million**

The development of oyster aquaculture is a new step for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), but one that could be critical to a viable commercial oyster industry. This funding is part of a multi-agency, 10-year investment to restore oyster populations and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

### **Chesapeake Bay Studies, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office- \$2.95 Million**

As the lead agency responsible for the multi-agency Bay Program, the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office plays a vital role in directing research in fisheries stock assessments, multi-species ecosystem-based management, habitat restoration, and scientific data management.

### **Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery - \$2 Million**

The Corps of Engineers' Oyster Recovery Project is working to create both managed harvest reserves and oyster sanctuaries, which will help create a fresh supply of oysters in the Bay. The oyster reef structures that will be created thanks to this effort will provide critical habitat and feeding grounds for other essential species and will also serve as natural filters screening out algae, sediments, and pollutants.

### **Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program - \$2 Million**

The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program provides grants to organizations working on a local level to protect and improve watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay basin, while building citizen-based resource stewardship. The purpose of the grants program is to address the water quality and living resource needs of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. The Small Watershed Grants Program has been designed to encourage the development and sharing of innovative ideas among the many organizations wishing to be involved in watershed protection activities. This program has proven to be an overwhelming success not only in promoting local stewardship and empowering local agencies and community groups to identify and solve local problems, but improving the Bay as a whole through the cumulative effects of these seemingly modest local efforts.

**Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network - \$1 Million**

The National Park Service's Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network ties together more than 120 museums, state parks, wildlife refuges, Indian reservations, water trails, and other sites in five states and the District of Columbia, to enable visitors to appreciate the far-reaching role the bay has had in the culture and history of our region. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network grants have funded new maps, improved signs, and expanded trails that have made visits to parks, wildlife refuges, and water trails more enjoyable.

**Oyster Hatchery Economic Pilot Program, the Morgan State University Estuarine Research Center in St. Leonard, Maryland - \$500,000**

This program is a key part of the Center's efforts to help prevent an economic collapse of Maryland communities that have historically been dependent on oysters and restore the once plentiful oyster population in the Bay. This program seeks to find market-based solutions to replenish the population of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay. By developing a means to produce a revenue source on a more predictable schedule, this project will help stabilize a declining industry and provide the means to stabilize the social and cultural foundation of many waterfront communities, not to mention significantly improve the overall health of the Bay.

**Chesapeake Bay Agro-Ecology Research, Harry Hughes Center for Agro-ecology - \$499,000**

The Harry Hughes Center for Agro-ecology has been established to encourage research and implementation of projects to balance the environmental needs of Maryland's rural communities with their agriculturally based economies. The Center provides competitive grants and works to educate key officials and the public about the aesthetic, environmental and economic value of our farms, forests and other open spaces and the need to protect and enhance open space-based industries in Maryland.

**Blue Crab Research, University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute - \$50,000**

The blue crab is one of the most important species in the Chesapeake Bay and has the highest value of any commercial fishery, but unfortunately blue crab abundance has been in decline in recent years. The Bay program partners, including the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources at Piney Point, are committed to restoring, enhancing and protecting blue crabs, their habitat, and ecological relationships to provide for a balanced ecosystem. However, the long-term management of the blue crab population in the Chesapeake Bay relies on a full understanding of the blue crab's biology, history, ecology, as well as assessing and resolving current problems.

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